

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 HEW-02 OES-03 AID-05 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 SP-02 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06 IGA-01 /049 W

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P 191135Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9314

INFO USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 8068

DEPARTMENT PASS TO DHER/PHS/OIH

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TBIO, IN, US

SUBJ: WHO MOSQUITO GENETIC PROJECT

REFS: A. STATE 139510 B. DELHI 6253

BEGIN SUMMARY. AFTER MEETINGS IN GENEVA BETWEEN US, WHO, AND INDIAN OFFICIALS, WE UNDERSTAND THAT HEW DETERMINED THAT, BECAUSE OF THE IMPOSSIBLE SITUATION CREATED BY THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMISSION REPORT, THE US WOULD NO LONGER BE ASSOCIATED WITH THE MOSQUITO GENETIC PROJECT AFTER THE TERMINATION DATE OF JUNE 30, 1975. IN CONSEQUENCE, WITH ANY FUTURE SOURCE OF FUNDS, WHO WILL ALSO RELINQUISH PROJECT CONTROL AS OF THE TERMINATION DATE.

IN SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSIONS IN NEW DELHI WITH ICMR OFFICIALS, IT WAS LEARNED THAT THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH (MOH) HAS MADE A STATEMENT TO THE CABINET THAT THE MOSQUITO PROJECT WILL BE CONTINUED BECAUSE OF ITS HIGH IMPORTANCE TO INDIA AND THE WORLD, BUT NO INDICATION WAS MADE OF WHO OR US INVOLVEMENT. THE MOH IS PRESENTLY SEEKING FUNDS FROM THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE FOR CONTINUATION OF THIS PROJECT AS A STRICTLY INDIAN OPERATION. END SUMMARY.

1. THE EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT US DELEGATION OFFICIALS

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WERE TOLD BY WHO OFFICIALS DURING THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

IN GENEVA THAT THE INDIAN HEALTH SECRETARY, MR. GIAN PRAKASH, WHO WAS IN GENEVA AT THE TIME ATTENDING THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY, COULD NOT MEET DIRECTLY WITH THE US DELEGATION TO DISCUSS THIS PROJECT, BUT WOULD MEET WITH WHO OFFICIALS WHO COULD ACT AS INTERMEDIARY. THE INDIAN OFFICIALS INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD BE WILLING TO CONTINUE THIS PROJECT WITH WHO ASSISTANCE, BUT WITHOUT ANY US ASSOCIATION. THE WHO PEOPLE REPLIED THAT THE ONLY MEANS OF FUNDING FOR THE PROJECT WOULD BE FROM THE US PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE AS IN THE PAST, AND THAT WHO ALONE DID NOT HAVE FUNDS AVAILABLE TO FULLY SUPPORT THIS PROJECT. THE INDIAN SIDE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT, IF POSSIBLE, THE RESIDUAL FUNDS OF APPROXIMATELY \$600,000 IN RUPEES THAT WOULD BE AVAILABLE AFTER THE PROJECT TERMINATED ON JUNE 30 OF THIS YEAR, COULD BE USED FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW BUILDING IN PONDICHERRY WHERE THEY WOULD INTEND TO HOUSE THIS PROJECT IN THE FUTURE.

2. THE AMERICAN DELEGATION REPLIED FIRST, THAT IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO FUND THIS PROGRAM THROUGH WHO WITHOUT ANY AMERICAN ASSOCIATION. THIS WOULD BE RIDICULOUS AND, IN FACT, ILLEGAL. THE DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL (CDC) (THE US FUNDING AGENCY) DR. DAVID SENSER, WAS EXTREMELY PESSIMISTIC ABOUT CONTINUING THE PROJECT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. SECOND, THE REMAINING \$600,000 COULD NOT BE USED FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION, SINCE THIS WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED BY DHEW ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS FOR USE OF SPECIAL FOREIGN CURRENCY FUNDS. THE US DELEGATION DID RECOMMEND TO WHO THAT THESE FUNDS SHOULD BE USED FOR PHASING OUT OF THE PROGRAM OVER THE NEXT SIX MONTHS BY THE PAYMENT OF SALARIES TO PROFESSIONAL SCIENTISTS AND PROJECT STAFF. (APPARENTLY, THIS MATTER HAS NOT YET BEEN SETTLED BETWEEN THE WHO AND THE ICMR.) THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH MADE IT CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT HE HOPES THAT THE PROBLEMS WHICH HAVE ARISEN FROM THIS PARTICULAR PROJECT WOULD NOT INTERFERE WITH FUTURE INDO-US COOPERATION IN THE HEALTH SCIENCES, SINCE THIS COOPERATION IS NOW GROWING AND FLOURISHING.

3. THE EMBASSY SCIENCE ATTACHE MET YESTERDAY WITH  
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DIRECTOR GENERAL INDIAN COUNCIL FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH, DR. C. GOPALAN, TO INQUIRE ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT'S STAND ON THE DENIAL OF CHARGES MADE BY THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMISSION. GOPALAN SAID THAT THE REPORT SENT TO THE CABINET BY THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH, REFERRED TO IN REF B, WAS PRIMARILY A TECHNICAL REPORT EXPLAINING THE VALUE OF THIS PROJECT TO INDIA AND THE WORLD FOR THE EVENTUAL ERADICATION OF MALARIA AND OTHER MOSQUITO-BORNE DISEASES SUCH

AS FILARIASIS AND YELLOW FEVER. THE REPORT STATES THAT THIS PROJECT WILL BE CONTINUED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA BECAUSE OF ITS HIGH VALUE, BUT IS VAGUE ABOUT WHETHER THERE SHOULD BE ANY WHO OR US INVOLVEMENT. GOPALAN SAID THE CABINET HAS NOT YET REACTED TO THIS STATEMENT. HE FURTHER STATED THAT THE MINISTER OF HEALTH, KARAN SINGH, IS COMPLETELY BEHIND THE CONTINUATION OF THE PROJECT AND HAS APPEALED TO THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE FOR FUNDS TO CONTINUE IT AS AN INDIAN NATIONAL PROJECT.

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9315

INFO USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 NEW DELHI 8068

DEPARTMENT PASS TO DHER/PHS/OIH

4. GOPALAN SAID THAT THE STAFF OF THE MOSQUITO GENETIC PROJECT HAS BEEN REDUCED TO 80 PERSONNEL AND ALL OF THE PROFESSIONALS HAVE BEEN RETAINED. HE ESTIMATES THAT TO CONTINUE THIS PROJECT WILL COST APPROXIMATELY 1.5 MILLION RUPEES A YEAR AT THIS LEVEL. HE ASKED THE SCIENCE ATTACHE WHETHER THE RESIDUAL WHO FUNDS THAT WILL BE LEFT AFTER THE TERMINATION OF THE PROJECT ON JUNE 30, COULD BE USED FOR CONSTRUCTNPIJHCA NEW FACILITY IN PONDICHERRY TO HOUSE THE PROJECT. HE WAS TOLD THAT THIS WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF DHEW REGULATIONS ON NEW CONSTRUCTION UTILIZING SPECIAL FOREIGN CURRENCY.

5. GOPALAN WAS ASKED ABOUT THE PRESS ARTICLE THAT APPEARED IN THE NATAIONAL HERALD ON JUNE 9 INDICATING THAT

THE WHO HAD AGREED TO HAND OVER THE TECHNICAL, OPERATIONAL, AND ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL OF THE MOSQUITO GENETIC PROJECT TO THE ICMR EFFECTIVE JULY 1. GOPALAN SAID HE HAD A TELEPHONE CALL FROM AN OFFICIAL AT WHO REGIONAL HEAD-QUARTERS IN NEW DELHI JUST TWO DAYS AGO STATING THAT WHO WOULD RELINQUISH CONTROL OF THE PROJECT AS OF JULY 1, AND THAT GOPALAN SHOULD BE PREPARED TO EITHER TERMINATE THE PROJECT OR CONTINUE IT, DEPENDING ON THE DECISION OF THE GOI. (WE CHECKED THIS PRESS ARTICLE WITH WHO OFFICIALS IN DELHI WHO INDICATED CONFIDENTIAL

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THIS WAS TRUE, AND GENEVA WOULD RELEASE AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT, WHICH APPEARED IN THE INDIAN PRESS ON JUNE 19.) GOPALAN FURTHER STATED THAT IF CONSTRUCTION WAS NOT POSSIBLE, HE WOULD PROBABLY USE THE FUNDS TO CONTINUE THE PROJECT AT ITS PRESENT LEVEL UNTIL THE GOI TAKES OVER THE FUNDING. HE WAS EXTREMELY APOLOGETIC ABOUT THE ENTIRE SITUATION AND HOPED THAT IT WOULD NOT INTERFERE WITH COOPERATION IN HEALTH RESEARCH BETWEEN THE ICMR AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE THAT WAS JUST BEGINNING TO ROLL AGAIN, AFTER TWO YEARS' NEGOTIATION.

6. COMMENT: WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD END US ASSOCIATION WITH THIS PROJECT AT THE TERMINATION DATE OF JUNE 30. AT THIS POINT, IT IS A POLITICAL FOOTBALL AND COULD NOT POSSIBLY FUNCTION AS A SCIENTIFIC PROJECT WITH US PARTICIPATION. WE UNDERSTAND THAT DHEW WOULD BE INTERESTED IN SEEING THE GOI CONTINUE THIS PROJECT WITHOUT US ASSISTANCE SO THAT THE FIVE YEARS OF RESEARCH WORK WOULD NOT BE WASTED.

7. THIS TELEGRAM HAS BEEN PREPARED BY SCIENCE ATTACHE METZNER WHO WAS AT GENEVA FOR A FEW DAYS DURING THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY MEETINGS. IT HAS NOT BEEN CLEARED WITH THE US DELEGATION. WE WOULD WELCOME ANY CORRECTIONS OR ADDITIONS WHICH DHEW MIGHT BE ABLE TO MAKE TO THIS REPORT. SCHNEIDER

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